MENTORING
A guide for mentor & mentees

In every art beginners must start with models of those who have practiced the same art before them. And it is not only a matter of looking at the drawings, paintings, musical compositions, and poems that have been and are being created; it is a matter of being drawn into the individual work of art, of realizing that it has been made by a real human being, and trying to discover the secret of its creation.

Ruth Whitman, American Professor and poet, 1922-1999

HISTORY

Mentoring takes its name from Homer's Odyssey. Ulysses, before departing for Troy, entrusts his son and his household to a wise friend, Mentor. Mentor serves not only as a counsellor to the prince during Ulysses' Twenty-year absence, but also as a guardian and guide. Most importantly, Mentor does not replace Ulysses in the parent role; rather, Mentor, with the help of the goddess Athena, helps the young prince to understand and embrace the difficulties that lie before him. Thus, Mentor's name passed into our language as a term for a wise and trusted counsellor and friend.

The task of the mentor, then, is to define a unique relationship with his or her mentee (also known as protégé) and this relationship aims to fulfil a need unmet by any other relationship.

DEFINITION

At Kadina Memorial School, mentoring is defined as:

"A more experienced person supporting another person to grow and learn in their role. The mentoring process is a two-way dialogue that includes modelling, observation and feedback. The purpose of mentoring at KMS is to enhance the teaching craft of both the mentor and mentee."

The mentoring process will include the following characteristics:

- Active listening
- Targeted, specific observations of teaching
- Giving and receiving constructive and critical feedback
- Modelling of good practice
- Being a non-judgemental, sounding board
- Sharing of ideas, guiding processes; offering of advice relating to teaching
- Being approachable, trustworthy and honest
- Having empathy
- Being open to new ideas

We believe that the mentor will benefit from the two –way dialogue through:

- Feeling valued and validated regarding their own practice
- A sense of satisfaction when supporting another professional,
- Exchange of ideas
- Receiving feedback
- Catalyst for recharging own energy and enthusiasm
- An opportunity to stay up to date with "education-speak"

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES OF MENTORS

At KMS we believe that good mentors display the following characteristics:
- Supportive
- Reflective
- Passionate and enthusiastic
- Attentive listener
- Open to new ideas and practices
- Shows genuine positive regard for the mentee
- Willingness to be a mentor
- Instils positive attitudes
- Comfortable with talking and sharing

PHYSICAL ASPECTS

At KMS we believe that mentoring is supported by:

- Prior contact between the mentor and the mentee (eg telephone, e-mail) to enhance the relationship

- Quality time for discussions and feedback so that time and other teaching constraints don't impact on the relationship or the quality of the interactions (this can occur during NIT time, out of school hours or negotiated release time from KMS leadership)

PEDAGOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

At KMS pedagogical topics that good mentors discuss with their mentees include:

1. Content knowledge- what is in the curriculum? What resources does the school have to support the teaching of the curriculum? How to differentiate for low/ high achievers?

2. Classroom Management- What is the school's SBM policy and processes? What SBM strategies are used to encourage positive behaviour and discourage inappropriate behaviour? Establishing authority as the teacher (rather than be the friend/parent/nurse.)Clear expectations (firm, fair, friendly, consistent)

3. Preparation- Where do I get resources? How do I get help/ resources? What is my "back up plan" when something goes wrong? Where is my teaching space and how can I set it up?

4. Planning- What is the content that I am expected to teach? How do I manage my time? How do I use learning design process to plan for an engaging and meaningful lesson? How do I access intervention support? How can I cater for the range of academic and behavioural needs?

5. Timetabling- What are the school's structures and expectations eg 300 mins Literacy/ Numeracy? Where are the learning areas and when are they available? What are the expectations for yard duty? Being flexible and responding to last minute changes. How do I cover all of the curriculum in my primary class?

6. Implementation of a lesson- How do I develop a positive relationship with students? How do I manage the pace and time of the lesson? How do I manage disruptive behaviour? How do I appear confident and assertive in delivering the lesson? What is my back up plan when the lesson is not working? Explain the purpose of the lesson to students

7. Assessment- What is the purpose of the assessment? How do I assess so that I differentiate for various student learning ability and learning styles? How do I mark consistently? What is moderation and how do I do it? What exemplars are there to support assessment? What is the school's timeline for assessment and reporting? Variety of assessments

8. Questioning skills- How do I ask open-ended questions? What do I do when questions lead in different directions to the one I have planned? How do I get all students engaged in discussion and responding to questions? What other ways can I manage questioning without the "hands up" response? How can I pose interesting and relevant learning challenges?

9. Problem Solving- How do I manage the angry parent? It is OK to get it wrong- just use it as an opportunity to learn. Any question about teaching and learning is OK to be asked. How can I teach students to solve problems? What care do I need to take regarding familiarity with parents in a country community?

MODELLING

At KMS modelling of good teaching practice should be part of the mentoring process, with the following aspects of teaching to be highlighted in discussions with the mentee:

- Well designed lesson structure
- Preparation prior to the lesson
- Effective classroom management
- Rapport with the students
- Differentiation for the learners
- Enthusiasm for the teaching role
- Evaluation of the lesson

OBSERVATION AND FEEDBACK

At KMS observation during the mentoring process should be:

- focused on the specific aspect of teaching as decided between mentor and mentee
- based on the lesson plan provided prior to the observation
- empathetic to context, experience and developmental stage
- clear on the negotiated and agreed role between mentor and mentee

At KMS feedback related to teaching practice should be

- Specific and timely (as soon as is practicable)
- Provided orally and in writing
- Be honest and constructive
- Allow for mentee reflection (recommended that the mentee's reflection be the starting point for discussion)

Following the observation and feedback it is recommended that the mentor and mentee decide on the focus for future observations and/or actions and that these be documented
Discussions about feedback and teaching points are not meant to be a "rescue package" but be based on providing future options and ideas for the mentee.

RESOURCES

Resources that the mentor might find useful to support the mentoring process include:

1. Mentoring for Effective Teaching (MET) DVD; web site www.tedd.net.au
2. Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) website and on-line program for supervising PreService Teachers (PST)   www.aitsl.edu.au.pst
3. Yorke and Mid North "Mentoring: a guide for mentors and new leaders" Pamphlet
4. Australian Professional Standards for Teachers
5. Various templates and checklists for observation, feedback and self-reflection - see Appendix

Other areas for discussion/starters

Immediate concerns & Questions
- Use induction booklet to work through, clarify
- Nuts & Bolts,
- Do they need more introductions to certain staff
- Parts of school not seen, aware of
- IT

Room environment
- Must haves/could haves
- Is it set up for success
- Do they need support

School Communication processes
- Decision Making
- Meeting structures
- Parent Information Night
- Newsletters

Health & well being

- How is home life going/living on own away from home first time
- Community involvement /possibilities, can we support this
- Social events/Friday pub??/Church
- Working & living in your school community

Teaching & Learning

- Planning & Programming
- Lesson plans
- Teaching resources
- Student cohorts, learning priorities,
- Intervention needs
- Differentiation
- Screening & assessment tools
- Student Intervention teams
- NEP/ILP
- Know who they are
- Aware of requirements to adjust

Student Behaviour management
- Awareness & working understanding of school process/procedures
- Class management plans
- Any support needed/specific students
- Protective behaviours

Camps & Excursions
School events/ceremonies/traditions

BUILDING KEY SKILLS IN A TEACHER'S FIRST MONTHS

The first weeks and months of a new teacher's career are a critical window of opportunity to accelerate classroom effectiveness. It is obviously a mistake to push new teachers to master every element of teaching from Day One. A much better strategy is to focus on a small number of building-block skills in the first three months and then broaden the agenda.

PRIORITIES FOR NEW TEACHERS

Before the first day of school:
•   Management routines and procedures 101: These are specified down in detail – exactly what is said and done – and the teacher plans how and when to roll out routines and procedures in the classroom.
•   Rigorous lesson plans: These include objectives and pre-planned questions that students will be asked.

By end of first month:
•   Strong voice 101: When giving instructions, the teacher stands still, strikes a formal pose, uses formal tone and word choice, and uses as few words as possible.
•   Checking for understanding: The teacher closely monitors student work, noting student errors, and assigns and reviews brief end-of-class mini-assessments to see who has mastered the material and who hasn't.

By end of second month:
•   Individual student corrections: The teacher redirects students, choosing the right spot on a continuum from the least to the most invasive like proximity, eye contact, body language, saying the student's name quickly, small consequences. The teacher anticipates student off-task behaviour and rehearses what to do next. The teacher restates expectations while looking at students who are not complying.
•   Data-driven instruction 101: The teacher analyses why students answered incorrectly; plans dates and times to re-teach what students didn't understand; scripts desired student responses; annotates in lesson plans which questions to ask students based on the analysis and then calls on those students.

By end of third month:
•   Pacing 101: The teacher creates a brisk pace so students feel constantly engaged; uses brief 15- to 30-second turn-and-talks; allows no more than two or three seconds between student responses and instruction continuing.
•   Data-driven instruction 201: The teacher scripts what will happen when students don't answer correctly; repeats wrong answers, giving time for the teacher and student to reflect; asks scaffolded questions that break the problem into smaller chunks; after correcting an error, asks the student who made the error to summarise the correct answer.

Crucial to mastering these developmental steps are frequent classroom observations by an administrator or lead teacher, feedback conversations and role-playing to practise effective questions and moves.
New teachers can be encouraged to think through what happened in classroom interactions, sometimes viewing videos:

Why was this student's answer unsatisfactory?
What was missing in the teacher's questioning?
What would have worked better? Let's try it.

This process is an incredible boon to new teachers.
It empowers them to get to the bottom of nagging worries about how effectively students are really learning, to master those practices that will lock in student success, and to do it all while honing their own instincts about what will make their teaching great.

FORMING MENTOR-MENTEE RELATIONSHIPS

It has long been recognised that not all people make suitable mentors and that the best mentors display certain traits, such as their ability to coach and to serve as a role model. But even the most accomplished mentors can fail to connect with a mentee resulting in a neutral-effect relationship,
at best.

Effective characteristics of a Mentor	Ineffective characteristics of a Mentor
Spots potential and believes in others Effective mentors have a positive view of others that greatly increases how much learning can be transferred.	**Too busy to mentor** Being busy does not have to kill a mentoring relationship; however, being too busy will. Ineffective mentees have too much going on and will not give the mentoring relationship the time and attention it needs to be successful.
Networked and resourceful Effective mentors enjoy a positive reputation and are held in high regard. They act as a repository of information and provide just-in-time learning	**Uses the mentee as help** Instead of having the mentee's best interests at heart, you pass on responsibilities, workload etc.
Patient and tolerant Effective mentors allow mentees to make mistakes and use the mistakes as opportunities to teach/learn.	**Overly critical** If you are a criticizing mentor, you always point out why something is wrong. You feel that your position gives you the right to point out mistakes
Encouraging Effective mentors possess the ability to build up mentees' self-esteem and encourage them.	**Not "with the times"** You do not keep pace with the times and do not know the current trends of your field. Mentees need mentors who are keeping pace with the times.
Sees the big picture Effective mentors have a larger perspective that helps them generate useful suggestions and bring up points that the mentee would otherwise not consider	**Ego striving** If you feel it might endanger your spotlight if your mentee becomes more successful than you, then mentoring is not for you.
Goal-oriented Effective mentees place a high value on setting and achieving goals.	**Too self-promoting** Ineffective mentees are constantly positioning themselves or engaging in name-dropping.
Seeks challenges Effective mentees are not satisfied with the status quo and want to accept new challenges.	**Lack focus** Ineffective mentors hop from one thing to the next without fully committing to anything.
Takes initiative Effective mentees do not wait for others to initiate learning.	**Overly dependent** Ineffective mentees are overly needy for approval.
Shows eagerness to learn Effective mentees are curious about what they do not know and ask for assistance or resources when faced with uncertain circumstances.	
Accepts personal responsibility Effective mentees do not shift blame, procrastinate or become easily distracted, but readily admit growth points.	